



Miami VA Healthcare System TROPICAL TOPICS

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Geraldine Hendry, LPN honored by ADVANCE for LPN's Magazine

An ECG nurse at the busy Oakland Park VA Outpatient Clinic, Geraldine Hendry, does much more than assist the primary care team in taking vital signs and providing immunizations. In the past year, Hendry developed a system that allows VA clinic nurses to successfully track any immunizations missed during patient visits. The procedure helped the VA call back many of its patients for their required shots, including 34 in one month.

"Her work has improved satisfaction and care coordination with our primary care providers," said Susan Meade, BSN, RN, C. "Geri is always eager to embrace change, especially when she understands a chance to improve patient care." Meade also credits Hendry for promoting the facility's new scheduling process, which is designed to allow patients to schedule appointments at times most convenient for them and for urgent needs. Hendry was one of the first to learn the new system Advance Clinic Access and taught others how to use it.

In addition, Hendry developed a process to ensure that fecal occult blood test cards (which are returned by patients to the clinic after take-home test kits are mailed)

are not destroyed in the laboratory if they have incorrect labeling or patient information. She did so by collaborating with one of our providers to send letters to patients regarding their test with their kits and before their scheduled appointments. The result has been 75 percent return rate on the kits, which is 13 percent higher than the VA normally expects to get back.

Hendry's willingness to address concerns in various departments is what really makes her stand out as a dedicated LPN.

Geraldine's nomination was submitted by Susan Meade, BSN, RN, C; Cathy Scantlan, BSN, RN, HNC; and Susan Mangery, Med, RN, CNA.



Chief of Staff John R. Vara, MD, Director Stephen M. Lucas and OPOPC Clinical Director Dr. Phillip Greenberg take a moment to congratulate Geraldine.



Mr. Ralph Shalda, COO VCS and Mr. Stephen M. Lucas, Director present Canteen employees with the prestigious award

Miami VA Canteen wins Outstanding Canteen Award for FY 2005

On April 24, 2006 a ceremony was held in the Miami VA Healthcare System Canteen Food Court to present individual awards to all Canteen employees by Ralph Shalda, Chief Operating Officer for Veterans Canteen Service and Stephen M. Lucas, Medical Center Director. Congratulations to the Canteen for this prestigious recognition of receiving Outstanding Canteen Award for FY 2005.

A Day on the USS George Washington “The Spirit of Freedom”



The Miami VA Healthcare System has developed a special partnership with the United States Southern Command. Each month, either General John Craddock, (4 Star) Commander, or one of his Commanding Generals, visits the Miami VA for a briefing on our operations, the outreach program for the returning troops and a bedside visit with our veterans.

On April 8, 2006, Stephen M. Lucas, Director of the Miami VA and I, Susan E. Ward, Public Affairs Officer, were officially invited by General Bantz (John) Craddock, Commander, United States Southern Command, to join Brigadier General Kenneth J. Glueck, his Chief of Staff, on a tour of the aircraft carrier USS George Washington. The invitation proceeded to state that the ship was off the coast of Florida and we would board a C-2A Greyhound aircraft to arrive on the USS George Washington on a tailhook landing. This sounded like the adventure of a lifetime, and since Mr. Lucas had served in the Navy, he excitedly accepted the offer. Mr. Lucas briefed me on what a tailhook landing was (when the aircraft lands on the aircraft carrier, there are four steel rope lines across the carrier that need to connect with an extended hook underneath the plane to suddenly stop it from moving; when the plane makes the sudden stop, it pushes you back in your seat with great pressure). I thought over the experience and said that if these sailors do this everyday and I can do it, too.

Saturday morning we all met at the U. S. Southern Command building. Joining us on our trip were the former Ambassador to Iceland, the Mayor of Coral Gables, a member of the Host Committee for Super Bowl XLI and the Director of Ministry Communications for the Archdiocese of Miami.

As Brigadier General Glueck greeted and briefed our group, he stated that we would be flying for an hour before landing on the USS George Washington.

I was starting to feel a little nervous when we boarded the C-2A Greyhound military aircraft - not a lux-

ury airplane. They handed me a lifejacket, a helmet with ear covers and a five-point harness that strapped me to my seat. The crew gave us a safety briefing and we were off to the USS George Washington.

Mr. Lucas with the Navy Quartermasters of the ship – he was a Quartermaster on the USS Iwo Jima when he served in the Navy.

We tail hooked on the third line as we landed and what a jolt it was, but we made it. After departing the plane, we were greeted by Rear Admiral Joseph Kilkenny, Commander, George Washington Strike Group, and Captain Gary White, Commanding Officer of the USS George Washington. For the next three hours we toured the USS George Washington, visited with sailors, viewed the flight operations and were up close for a landing on the flight deck.

Prior to our departure, Mr. Lucas had the opportunity to present Admiral Kilkenny and Captain Gary White with “Miami VA Best in VHA” and “VA 75th Anniversary” pins. They returned the gesture and presented him with an official coin. They also gave the group an album of pictures they had taken on our tour, a USS George Washington cap, and a certificate of completing a Tailhook Landing on the USS George Washington aircraft.

After our exciting tailhook landing and tour of the ship with 5,000 sailors on board, it was time to get back into the C-2A Greyhound aircraft. We were told we would be catapulted off the aircraft carrier for another exciting part of the day.

I am grateful for this great experience and I salute each and every one of those sailors who serve us every day on the USS George Washington – their motto - “The Spirit of Freedom”. I saw first hand how dedicated they are, and it makes me proud to know that the VA will be there for them after serving and protecting our Freedom.



In Our Flight Gear!

Hands on Miami Volunteers Celebrate National Global Youth Service Day

On April 22, 2006, over 60 volunteers from Hands on Miami partnered with Alee Karpf and Janet Dapprich of Recreation Therapy Service to assist in rebuilding the Hope Garden outside the Nursing Home, paint a giant size labyrinth and provide a casino party for the Nursing Home residents.



Nursing Home residents enjoy their casino party



Alee Karpf works with youth volunteers to rebuild the Hope Garden

Customer Comment Corner

What our customers are saying about our service to our veterans

Dear Mr Stephen M. Lucas,

I spent 4 months and a few days at your nursing home (NHCU-2). I didn't get to meet you but I did get a chance to meet a lot of your staff workers.

I came to your establishment aboard a C-130 aircraft along with 80 odd people who were saved from a natural disaster that struck New Orleans, LA (Katrina). Your staff quickly changed my nightmare into an environment that was conducive in restoring me mentally and physically. They treated me with great professionalism and with T.L.C. in abundance. These are the "little" people who drive the "engine" called the Veterans Hospitals across our great nation. They are not recognized but they are entitled to a "pat on the back," a "hand shake," or a

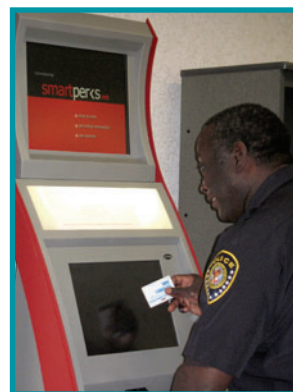
"commendation" for a job well done. I know that you're very busy but if you could just take a moment to give each of these valued employees a copy of this letter. They make the Veterans Hospital at Miami, FL rated #1 at the very top of the Veterans list. They are definitely deserving of their place in the spotlight.

Respectfully yours,

William R. Morgan



Morgan and his dog "Morgan Le Fae" reunite after being separated during Hurricane Katrina last fall



**VA Canteen Service
Special Order Kiosk
for convenient on-
line shopping from
the Veterans mall**

*Located in the
first floor patient
waiting area*

Disabled Veterans from the Miami VA Ski the Rockies At Annual Winter Sports Clinic in Colorado

Catastrophic combat injuries, blindness and paralysis did not stop more than 400 disabled veterans from across the country, including nearly 70 veterans from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, from taking part in the 20th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass Village, Colo., April 2-7. The event was jointly sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV).

The clinic is an annual rehabilitation program open to all U.S. military veterans with spinal cord injuries or disease, visual impairments, certain neurological conditions, orthopedic amputations or other disabilities, who receive care at any VA health care facility.

Carlos Leon, OEF/OIF Veteran

For 20 years, the Winter Sports Clinic has been a shining example of VA's commitment to help disabled veterans recover from their serious injuries and illnesses," said the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "Also important is that their determination, courage and achievement become models for other injured people to realize what they still can do with their lives."

During the six-day program, the veterans learned adaptive Alpine and Nordic skiing and were introduced to a variety of other

activities and sports, such as rock climbing, scuba diving, trap-shooting and sled hockey. The U.S. Secret Service also taught a course on self-defense for people with disabilities.

This year, for the first time at the clinic, veteran athletes set their sights higher, thanks to an agreement between the United States Olympic Committee and VA signed on Nov. 17, 2005. Clinic participants were introduced to racing techniques and other Paralympic sports such as wheelchair fencing. The clinic's own Chris Devlin-Young, recent silver medalist in the men's downhill skiing competition during the 2006 Paralympics in Torino, skied at the clinic and took part in this first-ever race training and development program. Devlin-Young and U.S. Olympic coaches were on hand to teach racing skills and philosophy as well as to identify those veterans with Paralympic potential.

"There is a true sense of community and a deep bond among veterans," said DAV National Commander Paul W. Jackson. "You feel it very strongly at the clinic. During this week, those brave men and women who have shared sacrifices in battle forge an even stronger bond through teamwork and competition."

Donald Thomas, SCI Veteran

VA Reaches Medical Records Landmark

The computerized patient record system of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), already a world leader among health care providers, has achieved a major milestone with the entry of its billionth "vital sign."

"This latest achievement attests to the capability and reliability of VA's electronic health records," said the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "VA sets the standard for patient record systems, and the ultimate winners are the veterans we serve."

Vital signs – data such as temperature, blood pressure, pulse, weight or pain levels – are routinely recorded for all VA patients. The nationwide system, known as VistA, collects more than 80,000 vital signs per hour during busy times, and the 995 vital signs entered in one minute during the morning of April 19 pushed the total over 1 billion. VA began consistently storing that information electronically on August 13, 1990.

"No matter where or when a patient receives care within VA, complete records are available to health care providers throughout the system," said Dr. Jonathan B. Perlin, VA's Under Secretary for Health. "This ensures that the veterans we are privileged to serve receive the high-quality, comprehensive care they need when they need it."

VistA was developed by VA's health care professionals and information technology experts. It is available free-of-charge to health care professionals in the United States.

VA operates the nation's largest integrated health care system, treating 5.3 million veterans last year at more than 1,400 sites of care, including hospitals, clinics and nursing homes.

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